Christopher SMART

1752

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By Christopher Smart

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Libitina ſine Conflictu;

OR, A

TRUE NARRATIVE

Of the untimely Death of

Doctor *ATALL*,

Who departed this Life on *Wedneſday* the 13th of *May*, 1752.

WITH

Some Account of his BEHAVIOUR during his Illneſs.

AND A

Faithful Copy of his WILL, *&c.* *&c.*

IN A

LETTER

FROM A

Member of Parliament to a Perſon of Faſhion at *Hanover*.

What now remains of all that Beau and Wit,
That once ſo flutter'd and that once ſo writ?

POPE.

His ſaltem accumulem donis. VIRG.

LONDON:

Printed for H. JEFFERY'S, in *Pope's-Head Alley*, *Cornhill*. 1752.

(Price Six-pence.)

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Dear SIR,

I WAS favoured in due Courſe with your obliging Letter, and immediately took every neceſſary Step in the Affair you recommended; and as Matters ſeem to be brought pretty cloſe to a Concluſion, I ſhall defer giving you an Account of my Negotiations till the final Reſult, when you ſhall hear every thing at length. In the mean Time I cannot poſtpone giving a Narrative of a melancholy and affecting Incident, which happened here within theſe few Days.

You knew the *Inſpector* well; you was an Admirer of his janty Air, his Taſte in Dreſs, his briſk Converſation, his every Thing that was agreeable;—but I am ſorry to tell you theſe are no more,—he is dead—about Two o'Clock on *Wedneſday* the 13th

Inſtant he expired, to the ineffable Grief of all his Friends and Domeſticks, and indeed of all Degrees and Ranks of Men.

What Emotions, what Senſations of Anguiſh muſt not every liberal Mind feel on ſuch a lamentable Event?—For my Part, I want Words to expreſs myſelf:—My Breaſt glows with an honeſt Indignation againſt the vile Perpetrator of this horrid Murder, the like of which has not been known in the Memory of Man.

A *Britiſh* Subject of the *Church of England* by Law eſtabliſhed, zealouſly attached to the Proteſtant Succeſſion in the Houſe of *Hanover*, one *who had Engagements of the happieſt Kind, Engagements which he hoped would laſt for Life*, is ſcandalouſly accoſted in a Place of publick Diverſion by a Perſon who held his Hat off while he ſpoke to him, ſuch a *Stranger* was he to the Forms of Behaviour due to ſo *ſingular* a Perſonage; one ſo *illiterate*, that he could not *converſe intelligibly*, not perceiving that when he imagined he was called out to fight, that the Intent was to *deliver him into the Hands of thoſe who are ſtationed to prevent Diſturbances in publick Places*; one ſo *irreſolute*, that his Arm *quiver'd* over his Antagoniſt's Head: I ſay

I ſay, a *Britiſh* Subject, the firſt Ornament of his Country, is ſeized behind in a dark Paſſage by a ſingle Ruffian,—three attack him before,—while a fifth draws his Sword and----*I know not what----our Enemies will tell the reſt with pleaſure.*

Information being given to Mr. Juſtice *L—d*, and the Right Honourable the L--d M---r, Warrants were immediately iſſued againſt ſix of the five; the Number Ten might have been as eaſily fixed upon, but that the *Iriſh* Evidences were on the other Side.

A Paper publiſhed ſome Time ſince, Dear ****, was the *pretended*, for *there was more in the real Cauſe* of this outragious Attack. Thoſe who are acquainted with the Intrigues of our natural Enemy, will eaſily penetrate into this deep-laid Plot. The *Marquis de Fretteaux* is no ſooner convey'd to *France*, by the Artifices of that perfidious Court, but the ſame Policy muſt ſend over an *Aſſaſſin* to commit a moſt cruel Murder on a Man, who was an Honour not only to *Letters*, but to his *Species*. Univerſal Conqueſt in Wit, as well as Dominion, is what the reſtleſs Ambition of the House of Bourbon is conſtantly aiming at; and

while that continues to influence their *Cabinet*, it is not to be expected they will ever make a ſincere Peace with *England*; but we ſhall, from Time to Time, feel the Effects of their turbulent Politicks. There is an unfortunate Perſon in this Town, whoſe Coat and Wig they have notoriouſly poiſoned; and I believe you may remember the Attempt they made upon Mr. *Harley*, even in the Privy-Council. It does not yet tranſpire upon what Motives the *Court of France* was urged to this Tranſaction: One Thing is clear, that *Monſieur de Voltaire*, jealous, perhaps, of the growing Reputation of this univerſal Genius, found Means to ſend over a Man in an *Iron Maſk* to perpetrate this atrocious Action; and it is ſuſpected that the Miſcreant is either a *French* Officer, or a Lay-Brother of the *Jeſuits*.

The Publick indeed, (that Wrong-headed Monſter) are idle enough to ſwallow a Report that he is a Gentleman of the County of ——— in *Ireland*; a genteel young Fellow, of a graceful Figure, good Addreſs, competent Underſtanding, and of an even Temper, no way diſpoſed to be quarrelſome. But, Dear Sir, I herein ſend you ſeveral

News-

News-papers written by our Author himſelf before his Death, among which you will perceive *different* Accounts of the Affair. As there is an *Univerſity* in its Infancy now at *Hanover*, whereof it is probable his Grace the Duke of * * * * * may be made Chancellor, if Foreigners have the ſame Opinion of his Abilities as our *Heads of Houſes* entertain at C———*ge*, I beg you will exert all your Intereſt to get theſe Records of ſo memorable a Tranſaction, tranſlated into all the modern Languages. It will be an Undertaking worthy of that *learned* and *illuſtrious Houſe*, and, in my Opinion, muſt greatly recommend them to the Eſteem of the learned World, this being an Affair that concerns the *Republic of Letters in* general.

But I fear I have wandered from the Point.---The Addreſs of our Enemies on this Occaſion is ſuch, that ſeveral Gentlemen of diſtinguiſhed Rank and Faſhion are won over to their Politicks; and among ſuch a Number of *Britons*, who own they ſaw what paſſed, there is not one to be found, who dares be *honeſt in the worſt of Times*, who has Courage enough to ſpeak out and confirm the Doctor's Account. On the

contrary, thoſe whom I ſhould have imagined Friends to their Country are ſilent, while our open and avow'd Enemies make no Scruple of calling every Thing he has advanced by a harſher Name than that of Falſhood, and even on the *deceaſed himſelf* they caſt Terms of Reproach in the ſevereſt Terms; forgetting that laudable Maxim, *De mortuis nil niſi bonum.*

They puſh Matters ſo far, as openly to aſſert, that our Author deſerved what he met with; that he had no Right to mark out to the publick Ridicule, a young Gentleman ſetting out in the World, to whom the *Caracature* exhibited of him, might be a Diſadvantage in many future Paſſages of his Life. That as he had not merited this Abuſe, it was a Compliment due to a Gentleman, to clear him in the Eyes of the World, from the Aſperſion, by a Line in his Paper, which, ſay they, if he meant right, he could not well refuſe; and therefore he was, with great Reaſon, lugged by the Noſe, which it is inſiſted was the only Aſſault made on the Doctor. Notwithſtanding this ſpecious Reaſoning, we hope Matters will appear in a Court of Juſtice, to the Confuſion of

our

our Enemies; and therefore, dear ****, I ſhall now proceed to the *laſt Scene* of this great Man, not leſs great for having been beat. The greateſt Genius's in all Ages have ſubmitted to Indignities. *Horace* (*a*) owns himſelf a Coward, and I am informed that there is now in the Preſs, *An Eſſay on the Antiquity of Kicking*, by the ingenious Mr. *Lauder*, wherein he proves that (*b*) *Ruſillus* and *Gorgonius* have ſeverally adminiſtered to the Bard the *Diſcipline of the Toe*. *Dryden* was can'd, and the Name of BROWN had like to have prov'd fatal even to Mr. POPE. (*c*)

All this, my dear Friend, was known to the Doctor, and he further learned from BEN JOHNSON, *that a Kicking is nothing to a Man that has read* Seneca; and ſurely, if the Study of an Heathen Philoſopher can adminiſter Conſolation in theſe Scenes of Adverſity, we ſhall not wonder at the exemplary Reſignation of our Hero, who deriv'd a ſtill more healing Balm from the

(*a*) *Relictâ non bene parmulâ.* HOR.

(*b*) *Paſtillos* Rufillus *olet*, Gorgonius *Hircum*. HOR.

(*c*) Mr. *Pope* boaſts of his Eſcape from Sir *George Brown*, whom he ridicules under the Character of Sir *Plume*, in his *Rape of the Lock*, THE BLOW UNFELT, &c.

the Chriſtian Syſtem; *no Enemy to which he ſuffered to exult unanſwer'd*, as he himſelf informs us.

Perceiving gradually the certain Symptoms of his End, he piouſly employ'd his Time in Meditations on Death, which he publiſhed for the good of Mankind; and ſo fervent was he in this Point, that every Day came out, *More laſt Words of the Doctor*, till at laſt *Apollo*, who was ſo favourable to him in his poetical, ſeem'd to deſert him in his phyſical Capacity. The ſixteen *Phyſicians*, who attended him, after a Conſultation of nineteen Hours and an half, all fell faſt aſleep; but being awaked by the Exclamations of the Patient, who was in a violent longing for a Porringer of *Lacedæmonian black Broth*, (*d*) they abſolutely forbid it, *as too ſtrong for his Situation*, and order'd the *bleeding to be repeated*, and the *other Medicines to be continued without Alteration*. Being deprived of his dearly beloved BROTH, he did deviate a little from the Chriſtian Scheme, and became a Kind of *Suicide*, by bribing one of his DOMESTICKS to procure him a Beef-Stake

(*d*) There is honourable Mention made of this in the Memoirs of *Martinus Scriblerus*.

and

and a Pot of Porter; of which he made ſuch copious Uſe, that it very much inflam'd his Malady. This the abovemention'd ſixteen Phyſicians having heard, they unanimouſly agreed that he muſt die, being the only Point HE or they *agreed* upon during his Illneſs.

Sentence being paſſed, and his *thouſand, thouſand Rivulets, tho' which the purple Stream uſed to run placid, throbbing* all over him, he reſign'd himſelf to his Fate; and being conſcious of a Commerce with a certain Lady, not quite conſiſtent with his abovemention'd Chriſtian Syſtem, he reſolved to make the beſt Atonement in his Power. To this End he ſent for the Lady, to her Abode, and for Mr. *K——th down Clarges-ſtreet, and turn o' the right Hand.* Both coming without Delay, the Doctor propos'd Marriage, which the *Nymph* at firſt declined, being upon the Point of Preferment with an Hiſtorian in *Fleetſtreet*: but recollecting that he could not long ſubſiſt, the Ceremony was immediately performed. The Doctor then extreamly languid, faintly pronounced thoſe emphatick Words of *Timothy Peaſcod.*

Mark well my Words, an honeſt Living get,
Beware of Iriſhmen, *and learn to knit.*

Here he turned to Mr. *K——th*, and began to queſtion him about the *Chriſtian Diſpenſation*, but the *Divine* candidly owned he knew nothing of the Matter, which to our Author was aſtoniſhing. "There is, ſays he, no ſuch Thing as invincible Ignorance read my *Saturday*'s Papers—— A worthy Clergyman of the Church of *England* is to be with me immediately." Theſe Words were no ſooner utter'd, than the O——y of *N——te* enter'd the Room; Mr. *K——th* here apply'd himſelf to drink the remainder of the Pot of Porter we before took notice of, and withdrew.

The Phyſician of the Soul began---- I came out of Chriſtian Charity to attend *a great Man in Diſtreſs*---- Have you ever ſeriouſly thought of Death?---- Why, as I told the Malefactors who were lately executed, it is an *opaque Body that hides from us the Beauty of Eternity*. Vanity, I am inform'd, has been your ruling Paſſion.---- What other Tranſgreſſions you have committed, will be much alleviated by a De-

claration

claration to me, which I ſhall take care to make publick for the Benefit of thoſe whom your Writings may have unhappily *faſcinated.*---- I hope you have never been guilty of Felony.---- " Yes----, reply'd our Au-" thor, too often---- but then it was to " get a genteel Livelihood.---- I have pur-" loin'd every Author, *Greek*, *Latin*, *French* " and *Engliſh*, that ever came in my " Way"----Here his Eyes glared with Fire, and he appear'd not to be in his ſound Senſes; for the PORTER had by this Time aſcended into his Head, and *even at the Seat of Reaſon played with his Mind, and the* Fever *tingling in every Pore*, inflam'd his Imagination. He utter'd from Time to Time ſeveral unconnected Periods---- At firſt, he ſaid with a Grin,---- No, no---- I was not beat—— I'll brazen it out---- a d----d two-handed Fellow---- call him a COWARD in my next Paper---- Caracature of me by *Hogarth*---- Nuts to *Fielding*---- In this State he continued for about three Hours, and tho' the ſixteen Phyſicians took t'other Nap, and ſtill forbid the *Lacedæmonian Broth*, nothing could give him Reſt---- Behold, ſays he, the *King of Si-*

lence---- Why do you ſhake your Locks at me?---- He comes upon me with haſtier Steps---- The Stream of Life is running from me---- Five upon me at once---- Get the Conſtable to ſwear five *Dozen*---- in my Account of this Day's Illneſs, Aſſes Milk---- More Streams of Life--- ſpoke ſoftly, but loud enough to be heard---- Bob for the *Nation*---- The FELLOW---- No Alteration in the Medicines---- Good Damages, if I live---- Lords ſtood by Sir *Richard Steel*---- Abandon a GREATER MAN---- The King of Silence again.----

Here the Stream flowed in greater and greater Quantities---- A Friend adviſ'd him to compoſe his Mind, and ſettle his worldly Affairs, which he endeavour'd to do; and as I know it will be Matter of Curioſity, I here annex a Copy of his Will.

The laſt WILL *and* TESTAMENT, *&c.*

IN the Name of the King of Kings, *Amen.* I *John Atall* of *London*, *Acad. Reg. Scient. Bard.* &c. *Socius*, being in as ſound Mind as ever I was in my Life, but of Body bruiſ'd and batter'd; do

do hereby make this my laſt Will and Teſtament. My Soul, I hope, will be ſoon *dancing* round a celeſtial Glow-worm in the *Empyreum*; and I beg that my Body may be admitted into the burial Place of the SCRIBLERI at St. *Giles*'s.

Having no great Matter of pecuniary Subſtance, or rather none at all, I have nothing to ſay on that Head.

To my Wife, whom I but now eſpouſed, I bequeath all my Writings on Stones and Foſſils, with an Aſſurance, that were it granted me to live, I ſhou'd leave no *Stone unturn'd* to promote her Happineſs.

Item, My Review of the *philoſophical Tranſactions* I deſire may be preſented to the Society of *Bourdeaux*, as a Teſtimony of that Gratitude I bear them for incorporating me with their Number; an Honour I could not obtain in my own Country.

As to all my other Writings, I leave free Poſſeſſion of them to thoſe who have paid dearly for them, *viz.* The Bookſellers; except as ſhall be hereafter excepted.

Imprimis, *Lucina ſine concubitu*, or Conception without the Knowledge of a Man, I deviſe to the Ladies of *Great Britain*;

to wean them, if poſſible, from that Affection they bear for *Iriſhmen.*

Item, My Book called the *Actor,* I bequeath to Mr. *Q---n,* tho' he has never been kind enough to thank me for preferring him to Mr. *G---k* in the ſaid Work; and tho' he has been unkind enough to ſay on the preſent Occaſion, By G---d it's a Pity his Noſe was not as ſlippery as his Tongue.

My *Saturday's* Papers I preſent to my Friend and Fellow-labourer in the Vineyard of Religion, Mr. *Macklin,* and I beg of him to retail the ſaid Papers from Time to Time at the *Robinhood* Society, where he has of late made ſo diſtinguiſhed a Figure.

Item, All my Romances, Novels, Natural Hiſtories of Vegetables, *&c.* my abortive Productions in Proſe and Verſe, my pilfer'd Diſcoveries in experimental Philoſophy, *&c. &c.* I bequeath to *John Axletree* of *Long-Acre*; recommending to him (there being Materials enough) to make a *Paper vis a vis* of them, the more eſpecially as I apprehend he will never gain a twentieth Part of what I owe him in any other Way by ſaid Works.

My

My Sword I leave to Major *En---d*, being aſſur'd he will make better Uſe of it than I have done.

Item, My CONFIDENCE I order to be divided in juſt Proportion among all my Countrymen, being perſuaded it will more than put them upon a Level with the Gentlemen of *Ireland*.

Item, My Freedom of both the Playhouſes I preſent to the Club my Readers have read of in my Papers, to be made Uſe of in Turn; but as Mr. *Cibber* does not want ſuch a Paſſport, I beg he will chuſe for himſelf one of my Wigs, and ſend my beſt cock'd Hat to his Son in *Dublin*.

Item, My Tea-Equipage, over which I us'd to write, I give to my young Pupil and Imitator, *The Village*; but warn him never to take Pen in Hand, while he is ſipping that dangerous *Female* Liquor, as I impute all my Misfortunes to it, on Account of that Propenſity it is apt to give a Man to Scandal.

Nothing elſe occurring to my Memory at preſent, I declare this my laſt Will and Teſta-

Teſtament on *Wedneſday* the 13th of *May*, and in the Year of the *Chriſtian Æra*, 1752.

JOHN ATALL.

*Signed and ſealed by the Teſtator
in preſence of us,*
ABRAHAM BEETLEBROW, *M. D.*
JOHN TIPSTAFF, *Conſtable.*

Our Hero had no ſooner dictated the foregoing, than his Lungs refuſed their renovating Function; the laſt Pang ſeperated Soul and Body, and thus deprived the World of this great Man.

Quando ullum invenient parem? HOR.

Yeſterday Morning the Coroner's Inqueſt ſat upon the dead Body, and a Report prevailing that the Doctor had taken a DOSE in order to evade the Deriſion of the World, and that his Enemies ſhould be hang'd for the Fact, ſeven and thirty eminent Surgeons attended to diſſect him. Upon opening the Body, what the Phyſicians had taken for an EMPYEMA, was found to be an Infla-

mation

mation in his Bowels. His Conſtitution ſeem'd to be conſumptive, and not fit for the marry'd State. However, his Heart appearing to be double, with a great deal of *Pus atque Venenum* about it, and a morbid Matter upon his Lungs, it was judged he muſt have received a violent Contuſion in the Aſſault. His Head was alſo diſſected, but indeed there was not found that Quantity of Brain which might be expected in one of his Abilities. After viewing the Traces which appeared on it with a *Microſcope*, they could ſee *ſelf* engraved on almoſt every Part, from whence it is inferred that muſt have been his chief Idea. Something like VERACITY was diſcovered, but a near Inſpection ſhew'd it to be VANITY. There were a great many other Impreſſions in *Greek*, *Latin*, *French* and *Engliſh* Characters, but ſo ſuperficial that they were almoſt effaced, which is not very material, as they are preſerved in his Works, thoſe *brazen* Monuments of his Fame. Not to keep Matters longer in Suſpence, the Jury was ſatisfy'd of the Villainy of this Affair, and

without further Deliberation, brought in their Verdict *wilful Murder.*

His Remains were laſt Night decently depoſited, according to his Deſire, in the Burial Place of the *Scribleri.* The Proceſſion was ſlow and ſolemn, conſiſting of Link-Boys, Coffee-Houſe-Boys, VAUX-HALL WATCH, Widows, Orphans, *&c. &c.* and Mr. *Macklin* for chief Mourner, with a Tragedy-Hankerchief in his Pocket :----He made ſeveral Efforts to cry, but could not. The following Inſcription is placed over the Tomb of the Deceaſed.

Under this Marble are depoſited
the Remains
of Doctor *John Atall,*
a Prodigy of Genius!
who through the ſeveral Gradations
of an Apothecary, a Stroler, a Phyſician,
a Novel-writer,
arrived at length to be the chief Ornament
of *Great-Britain.*
He continued for near the Space of two Years
to enlighten Mankind with the moſt *minute*
Obſervations

in

in the phyſical and moral World.
As it was his conſtant and unwearied
Endeavour
to diſplay the Excellence of the
Chriſtian Religion,
he finiſhed his Life by exemplifying
the truly charitable Spirit
of that Doctrine,
which teaches us it is better to bear than repel
Injuries.
Reader, do not let the much-to-be-regretted
Fate
of this accompliſhed Perſon
incline thee to murmur at the Decrees
of Providence:
Rather derive this Inſtruction from it——
That the benevolent Qualities of Good-nature,
Modeſty, Condeſcenſion and Affability,
are principally to be cultivated by a wiſe Man;
ſince the moſt *diſtinguiſhed* Abilities, the moſt
uncommon Underſtanding,
and the moſt conſumate PRESENCE OF MIND
cou'd not ſave the Doctor from an untimely
End.

 Thus,

Thus, dear Sir, we have accompany'd our Hero to his Grave, but even there he muſt find no Reſt. The buſy Spirit of the *French* Cabinet has been tampering with the Sexton, who has deliver'd up the Body to be convey'd to *Calais*. Notice of this being given, proper Steps are taken to intercept them; and this Day a certain Houſe was ſearched, but the Deceas'd was not then to be found, he being at that Time hid in the COAL-HOLE. It would be well if thoſe who have *no viſible Way of living*, that is, thoſe who are dead, were *regiſtered according to the Police in* Paris, which might prevent their being carried off in this outragious Manner. Application is now making to the Lords Juſtices to lay a general Embargo throughout the Nation; and it is the Opinion of the ableſt Politicians, that his Majeſty ſhould wave for the preſent the Affairs of *Germany*, return with all poſſible Expedition to his *Britiſh* Dominions, and ſummon his Parliament to meet without delay. A Meſſenger is diſpatch'd to the D——ke of *D——t* to continue ſtill in *Ireland*, for fear the Infection ſhould ſpread there; and theſe Means,

it

it is hoped, will, under Providence, prevent a civil War in theſe Kingdoms.

The Accomplices in this Murder have flown for Protection to Mr. Juſtice *F———g*, and they have procured a Man to take off the Doctor.——His Air, his Voice, his Wig, his Hat, his ſliding Walk, his lively Chat, are tolerably well hit of: The FELLOW carries the *Impoſition* ſo far as to publiſh a Paper every Day, goes about in an elegant Equipage, and by theſe Means they hope to elude the Hand of Juſtice. We have taken Advice upon it, and the moſt learned in the Law are of Opinion, had he lived, he would have made his *Fortune* by *Damages*; and add, that there is no doubt of his being dead, ſince it is plain to the World, that were the Doctor alive, his Paper would be carried on in a more maſterly Manner.

But, my dear ****, I fear that this Account is too affecting to your compaſſionate Temper.—Grief, which loves to dwell on its lamented Object, has lead me too far :----But the *Stream* of my Ink, which I have loſt in *great Quantities*, at length brings

brings on the *King of Silence.* I ſhall therefore add no more, but that I hope to have an Account from you of what his Majeſty ſays to the Affair, and I remain with great Affection,

Dear Sir,

Your very obliged obedient Servant,

Upper Groſvenor-ſtreet,
the 16th of *May*, 1752.

**** *****.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 4, l. 23, *dele* that. P. 8, l. 8, for Terms, r. Manner.

Speedily will be publiſh'd,

Some Remarks on the BRUISERS of the preſent Age, and their Manner of treating one another; more particularly relative to the Treatment of the *D*—— of *B*—— and the *I*——*r*. With a Dedication to Mr. *Broughton*.